

no comprehension of any truth

no basis at all & all indications suggest that Oswald was a fake
 Delgado's Game: He consulted Delgado to see him & he was taken
 as a quick study job. This suggests that he did
 not know what he was doing in New Orleans.

time was William Morgan, a former sergeant in the U.S. Army who had become a major in Castro's army. That August Morgan received considerable press coverage when he lured some anti-Castro rebels into a trap by pretending to be a counter-revolutionary.

Delgado recalled that Oswald wanted to emulate Morgan. They began talking about going to Cuba to join the revolutionary forces as officers and "lead an expedition to some of these other islands and free them too." They talked about how they would "do away with Trujillo." With Delgado's help, Oswald learned some elementary Spanish.

After the Cuban government started sending hundreds of Batista supporters before the firing squad, Delgado lost his enthusiasm for Castro, but Oswald defended him. He argued that in all new governments some errors were bound to occur, but he was certain that these people had been investigated prior to their executions and that the American press wasn't publicizing those investigations. For Delgado, leaving for Cuba had been barracks talk, mostly, but Oswald still wanted to go. He asked Delgado for ideas about how an Anglo-American like himself could, in Delgado's phrasing, "get with a Cuban, you know, people, be part of that revolutionary movement," and Delgado suggested he get in touch with a Cuban embassy. He believed that Oswald later made contact with the Cuban consulate in Los Angeles and received mail—perhaps pro-Cuban literature—from there. But for some reason Oswald abandoned the idea of going to Cuba, at least for the moment.

Delgado also remembered that Oswald had no use for religion—"He used to laugh at Sunday school . . . mimic the guys that fell out to go to church. . . . Oswald told him that "God was a myth or a legend, that basically our whole life is built around this one falsehood." The Bible was simply "a novel." Oswald preferred *Das Kapital* and other political books like George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Through Delgado, we are able to see that Oswald had little sense of irony. As he described *Animal Farm* to Delgado, the farmer represented the imperialistic world, and the animals were the workers or socialist people, and "eventually it will come about that the socialists will have the imperialists working for them." When he was asked if Oswald had explained that after the pigs took over the farm they became like the farmers, Delgado replied, "No; just that the pigs and animals had revolted and made the farmer work for them." Oswald had read the book literally and obviously missed Orwell's point.

Nelson Delgado's name appears in many conspiracy books, but no basis in the information itself it is not nearly as likely as Delgado's lack of comprehension

understands how many a shot. He was. Then, pretending that he was full and completely, he pretends that he was a good shot but just was not "enthusiastic." Then, instead of questioning the official, Mark, the quote TIME which is not what the official stands for. To make a fake point that is essential to his, she is doing that mainly because he testified that Oswald was a poor rifle shot when he was in the Marines:

Q. Did you fire with Oswald?

A. Right; I was in the same line. . . . It was a pretty big joke, because he got a lot of "Maggie's drawers" [a red flag indicating the shot had missed the target], you know, a lot of misses, but he didn't give a darn.

Q. Missed the target completely?

A. He just qualified, that's it. He wasn't as enthusiastic as the rest of us. We all loved—liked, you know, going to the range.

The key element in this account is that Oswald wasn't enthusiastic—he didn't give a darn. He scored just one point above the score necessary to qualify. As a raw recruit he had done better. And according to a report in *Time*, his Marine rifle-score book showed him "making 48 and 49 points out of a possible 50 in rapid fire at 200 yards from a sitting position, without a scope."

In the spring of 1959 Oswald struck up an acquaintance with Kerry Thornley, another young radar operator, who would be so impressed by Oswald that he would write a novel about him after his defection. As in the case of Delgado, Oswald became interested in Thornley after Thornley seemed to agree with some of his ideas—beginning with an admiration for the new Cuban leader. They met at a bull session during which Oswald learned that Thornley, too, was an atheist. "What do you think of communism?" Oswald asked him. When Thornley replied he didn't think much of it, Oswald told him, "Well, I think the best religion is communism." At first Thornley felt that Oswald was merely playing to the crowd, but he later decided that Oswald sincerely believed "communism was the best system in the world." Although he noticed some gaps in Lee's knowledge, Thornley considered him to be "extremely intelligent," and was surprised on learning after the assassination that Oswald had never finished high school. He thought the news media underestimated Oswald's understanding of Marxism:

I certainly think he understood much more than many people in the press have seemed to feel. I don't think he was a man who was grasping onto his particular beliefs . . . trying to know something over his head, by any means.

If she had just looked at it she would have known that this is not a novel

the behavior that Thornley suggests that he is a Marxist. But, take again Oswald's knowledge of Marxism. I am not a Marxist. I am a socialist. I am a humanist. I am a person who believes in the good of mankind. I am a person who believes in the good of the world. I am a person who believes in the good of the universe. I am a person who believes in the good of everything.

Oswald to prove himself. He had already made one attempt to penetrate the enemy underground. Now, if he could just make contact with the exile leaders involved in these "terrorist plans," he might come up with an even bigger trophy: inside information about the plots to kill Cuba's leaders. Once again he would seek out an exile group and offer his help—not as a guerrilla leader this time, but as a marksman who could assassinate Fidel. He would try to infiltrate as a volunteer, as he had before. While he was at it, he'd plant another little seed of provocation. He'd attempt to goad the exiles into retaliating against Kennedy.

In other words, the Odio incident was Oswald's reaction to Castro's warning.

Although I was fairly convinced of this by 1976, I still didn't understand why Oswald and the others went all the way to Dallas to carry out this scheme. Why did they go to Sylvia Odio, in particular? An article in the *Saturday Evening Post* that year provided an answer. The authors, George O'Toole and Paul Hoch, had apparently discovered more about Odio's father from some of the large number of Warren Commission records that were declassified in 1976. It turns out that Odio's parents weren't ordinary political prisoners, as the Warren Report suggested. They had been indirectly involved in a spectacular plot to assassinate Castro in 1961.

The plot was the work of Antonio Veciana and Reinaldo Gonzales, members of the anti-Castro underground. Veciana's mother had rented an apartment near the presidential palace from which they planned to fire a bazooka to kill Castro and other officials. Before their plan could be carried out, however, word of it reached the Cuban police. Veciana and his mother escaped to Miami, while Gonzales fled to a farm that was owned by Sylvia Odio's parents. Gonzales was tracked down and arrested, as were the Odios. Castro himself announced the breaking up of this plot at a public meeting in Havana in October 1961. At the time, the Odio daughters were already out of the country.

Having somehow learned of her father's background, her visitors apparently concluded (however mistakenly) that Amador Odio's eldest daughter might be interested in introducing a volunteer hit man to the underground. Notice the chain of association in their approach to her. They talked first about the details of her father's activities in Cuba. Then, "after they mentioned my father they started talking about the American. He said, 'You are working in the underground.' And I said, 'No, I am sorry to say I am not working in the under-

she was not in it

But he wasn't!

ground.' And he said, 'We wanted you to meet this American. His name is Leon Oswald.' ... And they introduced him as an American who was very much interested in the Cuban cause." Oswald told her the same thing, then stood silently, evaluating the situation. The underlying logic seemed to be: *We know about your father's connection with a terrorist plot to kill Castro. We believe you have contacts with the underground. Here is an American you can use.* Had Odio invited them in, she might well have heard the rest of their proposal about Oswald that evening.

What did they want from Mrs. Odio? Apparently, they hoped she would know, and tell them, the name of the right person to see—the leader behind these new assassination plots. And, in fact, it appears that Odio may have had a reputation for being able to put people in touch with the anti-Castro underground. Mrs. Odio told the Commission that in June 1963 she had spoken with a Uruguayan named Johnny Martin who claimed he could provide the exiles with second-hand weapons if she could put him in touch with an appropriate leader. As she later said, she had "jumped at the opportunity that something could be done" and arranged a meeting between Martin and an exile leader in Miami.

Mrs. Odio believed it would not have been difficult for anyone to find her. She testified that shortly before the Oswald incident, a speaker at an anti-Castro meeting in Dallas had mentioned that he knew her father in Cuba and that Amador Odio's daughters were living in that city. Odio said she could have been located by calling the Catholic refugee relief agency or even by consulting the phone book.

Overall, one gets the impression that Cubans in this country formed a tightly knit community in which news got around easily and secrets were hard to keep. Oswald may have found Mrs. Odio the same way he apparently found Bringuier—simply by asking around. Another New Orleans anti-Castro exile, Ernesto Rodriguez, has recently claimed that Oswald had also visited him to offer his services as a guerrilla warfare specialist, and that it was he who sent Oswald to see Bringuier. Thus, it appears that Oswald made more forays into the anti-Castro camp than anyone realized, or wanted to admit.

The real names of the two Latin Americans will probably never be known. We know enough only to speculate about their roles. The evidence suggests they were not anti-Castro activists, as they claimed. Angelo was likely the Latin American of similar appearance that Oswald was seen with in New Orleans. Both men evidently lied when

now who is a Marxist?

First the Oswald will know. What does this have to do with assassination?

always in p.p.s.

angels who did not tell FBI. No

Forays?

They did not say they were New Orleansians. They said they had just come from there

164 ... Oswald's Game

they said they were members of JURE and friends of Odio's father. (The other leaders of JURE said they had never heard of them, and Odio's father, now living in the United States, still insists they were no friends of his.) And if they were from New Orleans, as they said, they would almost certainly have known of the splash Oswald had made there in August as a Fair Play for Cuba activist. None of this rules out the idea that one or both of these men were anti-Castroites who had infiltrated Oswald's one-man operation. Leopoldo may have been an anti-Castro militant who truly believed Oswald would be an asset to his cause. But his telephone conversation with Odio followed Oswald's line with Bringuier so closely that this seems doubtful. And Leopoldo's parting shot about Amador Odio—"Is he still in the Isle of Pines?"—sounds almost like a jeer. It seems more reasonable that these three were birds of a feather than that they were working at cross purposes.

But let's pull back for a moment to get a broader view. Was there someone behind the scenes telling Oswald what to do?

Let's make that question more specific: Who would have had a reason to order Oswald to get inside the exile underground? Not the CIA, apparently, since the CIA already had plenty of contacts with that group—the CIA was, in fact, running the war against Cuba. The FBI? Maybe, though it's difficult to imagine that Hoover's boys would have wanted one of their operatives to go around suggesting that Castro's opponents should murder the president. Besides, it's hard to picture Lee Oswald working for the FBI or the CIA, unless we crop out everything else we know about him.

There is another possibility. Although the House Assassinations Committee concluded, "on the basis of the evidence available to it," that the Cuban government was not involved in the assassination, its report called the CIA investigation of the question of Cuban involvement grossly inadequate—and it attached a fine-print footnote:

With respect to the incident at the home of Sylvia Odio in Dallas, the CIA had developed since 1963 the ability to identify from physical descriptions possible intelligence agents who may have been involved. In fact, at the committee's request, the CIA attempted to identify Odio's visitors, and it determined that they may have been members of Cuban intelligence. The committee showed photographs supplied by the CIA to Odio who stated they did not appear to be the visitors in question. The committee came to the conclusion that had she been shown photo-

Why?
As known
Lodge
had not

The Troubling Testimony of Sylvia Odio ... 165

graphs in 1963, when the event was clearer in her mind, she might have been able to make an identification. It is also regrettable that the CIA did not make use of a defector from Cuba who had worked in intelligence and who might have been able to identify the Odio visitors.

An extraordinary footnote. And yet, it's hard to believe that Leopoldo and Angelo were Cuban intelligence agents. Anything this trio hoped to get out of Mrs. Odio they must have hoped to get right away, before she could check their authenticity with her father. The whole affair had an improvised, amateurish flavor. As we'll see later on, although Oswald wanted to work for the Cubans, he apparently got no further with them than he did with the Russians.

"As far as taking orders," Marina told the House Assassinations Committee, speaking generally, "I knew him personally and he didn't like to take orders." There's no reason to assume that Oswald was following orders when he went to see Bringuier or Odio, because he had a motive of his own—or, rather, two motives. He wanted to help Cuba, and he wanted to make a name for himself as a Castro supporter and revolutionary. He was operating in the uncertain present, with specific short-range goals in mind. Oswald was on his way to Cuba, he hoped, and he evidently wanted to come bearing gifts—much as he had done when he went to Russia with his military information.

The simplest and most reasonable conclusion is that the Odio incident was Oswald's idea. Looked at more closely, each of the tactics used was typical of Oswald in some manner. It was like him to pose as a leader: the guerrilla warfare expert, the expert marksman. He was putting his military training to ironic use—as an enlisted man, Oswald had once complained that all the Marine Corps did was teach you to kill, and after you got out you might be a good gangster. The second tactic—trying to draw the exiles into a violation of the law—also sounds like Oswald, who often showed a tendency to be legalistic. And finally, the threat against a president's life was also in character, since he had already made a verbal threat against Eisenhower. *no po*

But it wasn't just the tactics. The entire incident had the imprint of Oswald's personality on it. Consider another remark of Marina's. She was asked if she thought her husband would have prepared for his defection by learning Russian: "Was that a trait of his . . . that when he got ready to do something he felt was important he spent a period of time preparing for it?" She answered, "I would say yes," and a few minutes later circled back to the same question: "Going back

to say that Lee was always preparing for something, he not always prepared himself [sic], but he was quite calculating in that respect, and sometimes quite clever. He would masquerade somehow." George de Mohrenschildt, too, saw this trait of his. Concerning the theory of the conspiracists that Oswald was working for the anti-Castro side in New Orleans, he wrote:

I cannot visualize Lee being in cahoots with these Cuban refugees in New Orleans ... but he might have played his own game, meeting some of them, checking just for the hell of it what their motivations were. The amazing and attractive side of Lee's personality was that he liked to play with his own life, he was an actor in real life. A very curious individual.

On the other hand, I can very easily visualize Lee joining a pro-Castro group.

The Odio incident was characteristic of Oswald. There was even, perhaps, a model for it from his childhood, although this was probably an event he had long forgotten. In Fort Worth sixteen years earlier, Marguerite had also stood outside a rival's door with two confederates. As the ringleader, she told one of them what to say—"Telegram for Mrs. C. _____"—to trap her wandering husband, Edwin A. Ekdahl. As Robert said, his brother's "imagination and love of intrigue" were a lot like his mother's.

The compelling aspect of Sylvia Odio's testimony is the window it provides on Lee Harvey Oswald's thinking just two months before Dallas. Up until then, there was little indication that Oswald felt any animosity toward John Kennedy. In fact, he seemed to favor him over the other politicians on the scene. In August he had publicly blamed the CIA and State Department for America's policy toward Cuba. But sixteen days after Castro's warning appeared, Oswald not only tried to penetrate the plots Castro spoke about, he suggested that Kennedy should be killed. The September 9 warning evidently had an effect: Oswald now believed that Castro was in danger and that the Cuban leader held Kennedy responsible.

This conclusion is admittedly based on inferences—I have deduced Oswald's thinking by reading Odio's testimony in light of his past behavior. The method I've used is an old one. During closing arguments in a trial, each attorney will attempt to weave the available evidence into a reconstruction of the events in question. It is then up

to the jury to decide whose account is more likely to be true. I have presented the Odio incident within a narrative of Oswald's other activities, showing how the pieces mesh. Although I don't claim to have conclusive proof, I do maintain that my interpretation is more credible than the alternative theories.

Only two other explanations of this incident have been given—that it was an extraordinary case of mistaken identity, or a plot to frame a Marxist by presenting him as an anti-Castro hit man. Neither view can be totally disproved. But neither encompasses the other evidence about Oswald nearly as well as the solution I've proposed.

I found new support for my argument in 1977, when I learned that Lee Harvey Oswald had made a second threat against Kennedy's life just a few days after he left Sylvia Odio's doorstep. The man who revealed this threat was not an unknown named "Leopoldo," but Fidel Castro himself.

Communist party, and *The Worker* telling them of his political work, and he would save their replies. He would write up the details of his work under such headings as Marxist, Street Agitation, Radio Speaker, and Lecturer. In the fall he would present this material when he applied for a Cuban visa in Mexico City. (We know this because the résumé material was found among Oswald's belongings after the assassination, and an employee at the Cuban Embassy described some of these credentials to the Mexican police.)

What did Oswald hope to do after he got to Cuba? Certainly, he didn't expect to be given factory work or be sent to a Cuban equivalent of Minsk. Oswald had a rigid and willful personality, seemingly incapable of fundamental change; he kept repeating the same patterns over and over. Disappointed by his reception in Russia, he probably expected that the Cubans would recognize his abilities and give him the important assignment he thought he deserved.

It may be that he returned to the dream he had discussed with Nelson Delgado just four years before—becoming an officer in Castro's army to lead a revolution in another country. This was not as fantastic an ambition as it might seem. In 1963 it was illegal for Americans to travel to Cuba. But during March there had been a flurry in the press about a so-called "subversion airlift" flying between Mexico City and Havana. Some of these stories appeared in *Time*, a publication Oswald subscribed to (although it isn't known whether he saw them). On March 29, for instance, the magazine reported that there were twice-weekly flights from Mexico City and that, in 1962 alone, approximately 1500 Latin Americans and others had been taken to Cuba for "indoctrination and guerrilla warfare training." *Time* claimed that "thousands of students, small-time labor leaders, intellectuals and professional men" were getting "all-expense-paid tours" of Cuba and that many returned to their countries to become "terrorists, guerrillas, and Communist party workers." The article said that until February 15 "it was no trick to fly to Mexico, where the Cuban embassy issued a visa on a slip of paper. No telltale stamp marred the passports. Now the Mexicans stamp passports 'Salíó a Cuba' in bold letters. But, of course, passports can be conveniently 'lost,' destroying the evidence." *Time* also noted that the airlift had figured prominently in the questions and answers at President Kennedy's press conference a week earlier.

During the summer a group of 58 students sponsored by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee defied the U.S. ban on travel to Cuba. President Kennedy publicly condemned their action, and the State

Department lifted their passports when they returned. In July Edwin E. Willis, the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, gave a speech in New Orleans in which he charged that many of the travelers had Communist backgrounds and had returned to this country "to lecture on the glories of Castro's Cuba."

At some point Oswald considered hijacking a plane to Havana. He studied airline schedules and maps, and when Marina refused to go along with the scheme, he told her he would go ahead on his own. On July 30 the *Times-Picayune* covered the Cuban flights from Mexico City and noted, "Any American with a valid passport and a clean criminal record can enter Cuba via Mexico without State Department authorization provided he is acceptable to Cuban authorities and aerial transportation is available." After this—Marina thought it was in late August—Oswald burst into the apartment with the news that he had found a legal way to get to Cuba. According to McMillan, he told her, "There's a Cuban Embassy in Mexico. I'll go there. I'll show them my clippings, show them how much I've done for Cuba, and explain how hard it is to help in America. And how above all I want to help Cuba."

In late May Oswald's campaign to establish his pro-Castro credentials was just beginning. He was also trying to get Marina to answer a letter she had received from the Soviet Embassy in Washington in April, asking her to state her reasons for wanting to go back to the Soviet Union. On the same weekend that Oswald wrote the Fair Play for Cuba Committee asking for a charter, Marina sent a plaintive letter to Ruth (in Russian): "... As soon as you left all 'love' stopped, and I am very hurt that Lee's attitude towards me is such that I feel each minute that I bind him. He insists that I leave America, which I don't want to do at all. I like America very much and think that even without Lee I would not be lost here. What do you think. This is the basic question which doesn't leave me day or night."

Without waiting for a reply from the Committee, Oswald dropped by the Jones Printing Company opposite his workplace. Using the alias "Osborne," he ordered, for \$9.89, one thousand copies of a handbill reading:

HANDS OFF
CUBA!

But Jones
told FBI + me
was not Oswald

and she locked him in the bath room - which had its lock on his side, not his. That's why Danson says that Marina "physically restrained" him. But Danson also 6 sources, actually, Marina's agent made this up for her.

Marina wanted, would have meant scrapping his identity and constructing a new one—or becoming a hypocrite in his own eyes, someone who sat around and talked but did nothing.

The attack on Walker resembled his defection in another respect: it was carefully planned. Part of the excitement must have been in the detailed anticipation. The note he left Marina indicates that he had considered every eventuality—that he might be killed or arrested, or that he might escape, possibly to another country. Albert Newman believes that had Oswald assassinated Walker he intended to go to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City, tell the officials there what he had done—proving it with his notebook and photographs—and ask for asylum in Cuba, an "extradition-free" country. McMillan suggests that in the event of an arrest he might have used his trial as a forum to denounce American fascism, before asking for asylum in Russia. At any rate, as Marina later said of the backyard photographs, "He must have had something in his mind—some grandiose plans."

On April 21 Oswald staged another dramatic scene. After reading the morning newspaper he got dressed and put his Smith & Wesson pistol into his belt. He informed Marina that former Vice-President Richard Nixon was coming to town and that he wanted "to go and have a look." Marina has testified that she replied, "I know how you look"—and physically restrained him from leaving the apartment. (In fact, Nixon was *not* coming to Dallas, but that day's *Morning News* reported a speech he had made in Washington. The banner headline read, "Nixon Calls for Decision to Force Reds Out of Cuba/Open U.S. Support of Rebels Urged.")

When skeptical Commission members questioned her about this incident, Marina admitted that she could not have kept her husband from leaving their apartment if he had really wanted to go. She said that at first he was angry and told her, "You are always getting in my way," but then rather quickly gave in. "It might have been," she continued, "that he was just trying to test me." (Thinking back on it, Marina saw the incident as a "kind of nasty joke," an example of a sadistic streak he had. She also told the Commission that he would make her write letters to the Russian Embassy asking to be allowed to return to the Soviet Union: "He liked to tease me and torment me in this way . . . especially if I interfered in any of his political affairs, in any of his political discussions.")

It isn't clear why Oswald now decided to move to New Orleans. Marina has said it was her suggestion that he go to his hometown to find work, because she wanted to get him away from the temptation

of trying to kill Walker again. But it also appears that Oswald had, as usual, some political goal in mind. When Ruth Paine visited the Oswalds on April 24, she found them waiting with their bags packed ready to be driven to the bus station. Rather than see the pregnant Marina make the long bus trip with a small child, she offered to let them stay with her while Lee went ahead to look for a job. This was evidently exactly what Oswald had intended all along. She drove him to the terminal to check his baggage, and the next day Oswald took a bus to New Orleans.